

THE
W I D O W,
OR A
Picture of Modern Times,
A NOVEL,
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS
IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY
MRS. M. ROBINSON,
AUTHOR OF
POEMS, AINSI VA LE MONDE, VANCENZA,
MODERN MANNERS, &c. &c.

VOL. II.

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VOL. 2

ERRATA.

Page. Line.

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| 2 | 20 | for scarcely,—read <i>scarcely</i> . |
| 3 | 1 | — women,—read <i>woman</i> . |
| 33 | 8 | — itself,—read <i>itself</i> . |
| 36 | 7 | omit the comma at <i>triumphs</i> . |
| 60 | 12 | — your,—read <i>yours</i> , |
| 69 | 3 | — claims,—read <i>claim</i> . |
| 80 | 15 | — recal,—read <i>recall</i> . |
| 94 | 11 | — loose,—read <i>lose</i> . |
| 98 | 11 | — seems,—read <i>seem</i> , |
| 106 | 12 | — eclairissiment,—read <i>eclaircissement</i> . |
| 109 | 1 | — BLULH,—read <i>BLUSH</i> . |
| 113 | 16 | — epithalanium,—read <i>epithalamium</i> . |
| 166 | 13 | — adorning,—read <i>adoring</i> . |

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THE
W I D O W.

LETTER XLVI.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE to Mrs. MORE-
TON.

Harefield Forest, Sept. 179—

CERTAINLY, my dear friend, the
difference of the minds of women, is
as great, as that of their persons: I
have often thought that the pains we
feel, owing to sensibility of soul; are
Vol. II. A more

more than equal to the delights, the happiest can experience! the events of this evening, convince me of the justice of my opinion; and I am certain, you will, when you have read this letter, think exactly as I do.

Lady Seymour, Mrs. Vernon, and Sir Charles, came after dinner, to request that I would accompany them to a farm house, at two miles distance, where they frequently went to drink tea, in all the enchanting neatness, of rustic life. I was not much inclined to attend them, but their earnest entreaties at length prevailed. We found, at the farm, an old man, his wife, and a young woman, their daughter, about eighteen years of age, extremely handsome, and perfectly modest. Mrs. Vernon, had scarcely rested after the fatigue of her walk, before

she

she began to ask, the young women the most taunting questions, who knew not how to answer but with truth, and simplicity; "when do you mean to get a husband?" "next week madam," said the girl, curtesying; "what I suppose you are going to marry some stupid clodpole of your own species?" "yes ma'am" said the timid damsel, not comprehending her language. "And are you such a fool as to throw yourself away upon a poor stupid peasant, who will soon hate you, and render you miserable?" said Mrs. Vernon, besides, continued the mischief-maker, "I believe I know your charming swain; he comes every day to the castle and flirts with the maids." The poor girl reddening like scarlet burst into tears, and sobbed as if her heart was breaking; Sir Charles who observed her distress, looked at me and

shook his head, then taking her by the hand entreated her to be pacified, and not to believe one word of what Mrs. Vernon had been saying. "Well," said Lady Seymour, affecting great resentment; "this is the most extraordinary instance of effrontery I ever beheld; to receive the caresses of my husband, before my face! now, I have discovered my rival, I shall make an example of her" the trembling girl, earnestly protested her innocence, and said, "she never had *seen* the gentleman except when he came to the farm, sometimes with *that* lady," pointing to Mrs. Vernon. Here a new and real source of suspicion spread the blush of indignation on the cheek of Lady Seymour. Mrs. Vernon was overwhelmed with confusion, when Sir Charles, giving the girl a handful of money told her to go and seek her sweetheart, and

not

not grieve about the stories she had heard; for that they were wholly untrue, and only invented to torment her. The damsel thanked him; and her countenance resumed its natural serenity.

We left the farm, and strolled across the fields towards home; on a sudden the sky grew dark and it began to thunder most awfully; we ran towards a large tree at some distance; the storm increased, the rain poured in torrents and the flashes of lightning were frequent and dreadful; we there found, (sheltering themselves from the enraged elements,) a poor woman, and two little children; the eldest about five years old; one was in her arms, the other had hid itself under its mother's tattered gown, and was crying, mournfully. Mrs. Vernon, looking at them

with an air of disdain, and keeping at a distance, as though she dreaded some dangerous infection; bid them instantly depart; "don't you see *we* want to secure ourselves from the storm?" said she "I really wonder at your assurance." My heart palpitated with indignation at her want of feeling. "Dear madam" said I "Let the good woman remain where she is; consider, the affrighted children have scarcely any thing to cover them; the rain will chill their little bosoms, or perhaps the lightning destroy them; here is shelter enough for us *all*, or if you have not room sufficient, I will resign *my* place with pleasure!" "I am astonished to hear you talk such nonsense" replied Mrs. Vernon, "why *they* are not like *us*; *they* are used to all sorts of hardships, the rain won't hurt *them*; and as to the lightning, if

it

it should please Heaven, to take the poor things, it would be but merciful; for I am sure they look as if they were starving!" the woman, took the infant she was nourishing from her bosom, tenderly kissed it; and, with tears starting from her eyes, left the tree without uttering a syllable, I watched her until she was at the distance of twenty yards; wishing to avoid the ostentation of charity. But my heart was bursting with pity: I could not bear it; I ran after her, and gave her my purse, containing, *not much*, heaven knows, but it made her smile; and I was happy.

I had scarcely quitted the poor woman, when I heard a shriek from the spot which I had just left. I instantly perceived the tree shattered by the lightning, and Mrs. Vernon, terrified

fied and pale, flying across the field. Though I was deeply impressed with what had passed, I could not help smiling at her apparent alarm. Lady Seymour was unable to proceed, for laughing, and Sir Charles, taking me by the hand, said, "Mrs. St. Laurence, I see you know the luxury of doing good! But you will never be forgiven by Mrs. Vernon, for the event of this evening,—because little minds cannot pardon the superiority that shames them." "I know I shall be forgiven by Mrs. Vernon," said I, "for I have done good."

We returned home, and I could not resist the impulse I felt of communicating to you the adventures of a day so interesting.

My dearest friend,

Affectionately yours,

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

Mrs. VERNON to Lady ALLFORD.

Harefield, Sept. 1799.

I AM now perplexed, my dear Lady Allford, in such a maze of difficulties, that I know not how to proceed. Lady Seymour's fondness for Woodley, and his visible indifference towards her, convinces me, that his addresses have been *successful*; and that her humiliation will shortly be completed; so far we ought to rejoice; but my plan respecting Sir Charles fails entirely; he has already broke my chain, and is now desperately

rately enamoured of the beautiful cottager; he visits her daily, and it is with that sort of respectful adoration, which promises no hope of diminution; I am resolved, (if he continues insensible to my attentions) to inform Lady Seymour of his conduct. Woodley is already tired of his *new* conquest, and I believe, from his penitential, and melancholy looks, would gladly suffer me to inflict the punishment of matrimonial fetters; next winter will be early enough for such a triumph; and, I think, he deserves at least a few weeks punishment, for his want of taste, and inconstancy. Lady Seymour is *au désespoir; tant mieux!* She has no right to expect more happiness than the rest of her friends; I have some fears respecting the propriety of countenancing the pretty St. Laurence; there is a simplicity

plicity in her manner, that seems rather the effect of study, than the work of nature. It would be dreadfully provoking, if I should be known to protect a woman of equivocal reputation, whatever her *merit* may be. She is sensible, accomplished, and lovely, I confess; but she has not *rank* to procure her the *entrée* of fashionable houses; nor does she possess that unembarrassed manner, so essential to a woman of *ton*! Her beauty is of the vulgar kind; merely, the roses and lilies of youth; she has no idea of *play*, and would make but an awkward figure in *our* societies. Yet, I am desirous of taking her to London, because she will prove a magnet to draw Sir Charles, whom I have destined to be the eternal torment of Woodley! With the vast difference of rank, ~~to~~ cannot think of marrying

Mis.

Mrs. St. Laurence, and if he makes her the object of his gallantry, it will be a delightful mask for his visiting my house, more frequently than propriety would sanction. If I discover any symptoms of regard, on her part, towards Sir Charles, I shall, without the least ceremony, dismiss her; my prudence will then be the admiration of all the tabbies in the court circle, and Lady Seymour's friendship for me, will be more strongly cemented than ever. Sir Charles is a bewitching wretch, and I begin to wonder how Lady Seymour had resolution to sacrifice him; but she is my *friend*, and I must not condemn her.

My dear Lady Allford,

Adieu; yours truly,

AMELIA VERNON.

LET-

and if he makes her the object of his gallantry, it will be a delightful mark for his visiting my home more frequently than

LETTER XLVIII.

Lord ALLFORD to Lord WOODLEY.

Rose Hill, Sept. 179—

DO not hesitate to follow the dictates of your heart,—if the woman you love, deserves the entire possession of it, make the sacrifice, and be happy! I feel but too sensibly, every hour, the miseries of an interested marriage, and the pangs of remorse are considerably augmented, by the recollection of the comforts I have lost! Lady Allford is my torment; the fortune she brought, she deems, more

more than equivalent for the *title* it purchased; and I am frequently provoked with the opprobrious epithets of “interested monster;” “ungrateful being;” and a thousand others, too severe, yet too *true* to repeat. I respect public opinion, too much, to violate the propriety of domestic peace. I believe Lady Allford to be virtuous, and I esteem her for the regard she pays to my feelings, in that *one* instance, though in *every other* she tortures me beyond my patience. Such is the misery of an hasty union; such is the punishment the being endures, who sacrifices the pure, honourable feelings of a susceptible mind, at the shrine of avarice and ambition. Woodley, marry your amiable enchantress; marry her immediately, if she is worthy of being your wife; and when

I

I meet you in town, let me witness
the truth of your opinion, and attest
the merit of Lady Woodley.

Your's ever,

My dear Lord, most truly,

ALLFORD.

LET.

LETTER XLIX.

Lord WOODLEY to Lord ALLFORD.

Harefield, Sept. 179—

I HAVE followed your counsel, and (since I can obtain her by no other means) she shall be mine by the awful ceremony of an honourable union! I will immediately write to her, and you shall know her decision; she cannot possibly refuse to be my wife; though her delicacy might have been wounded by the abrupt avowal of my passion; I am all agitation hope, and fear! Allford, I thank thee; I only wanted *one* honourable man to applaud

plaud my resolution; and with thy
approbation, I will defy the sarcastic
smiles of the rest of the universe,

Yours, ever,

WOODLEY.

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B

LET-

LETTER L.

Lord WOODLEY to JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

Harefield, Oct. 179—

THE conviction that I can only hope for happiness, in the possession of your esteem, prompts me, with all the fervour of an unfeigned and unconquerable passion; to lay at your feet, the trivial claims of rank and of fortune; and to hope, that by making them *yours*, you will give them consequence. I never, until I beheld the form of Julia St. Laurence, knew that the power of beauty was supreme!

preme ! or that the timidity of honourable sensibility was the most fascinating charm to hold the vagrant heart of an avowed libertine. Fashion mine, madam, after the model of your own perfection, for it is *yours*. It will appear to you, that I am hasty in my decision ; but I am so circumstanced, that there is no time to be lost ; will you pardon me, if I request on your part, a candid avowal of your *real* situation, the condition of your family, and the occasion of your present retirement ? When you reflect, that it will be the whole occupation of my life to render you happy, I trust you will not hesitate, to allow me every opportunity of extending my respectful esteem, to all those who have the honour of being related to you. I have one more kindness to entreat, which is, that the

most profound secrecy may be observed until I can call you mine entirely. I will wait upon you this evening; do not refuse me admittance; I come as an humble petitioner; the meekness of your soul, cannot refuse to hear the voice of an imploring being, whose only hope of happiness, rests in the generosity of your nature.

WOODLEY.

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LETTER LI.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE *to Lord*
WOODLEY.

Harefield Forest, 179—

YOUR letter, my Lord, awakens my regret, and demands my gratitude. But alas! you are deceived if you imagine that I have the power of rendering you happy. The deep impression of a long cherished sorrow has subdued my mind, and rendered it wholly unfit for the brilliant scenes of splendid society; yet could I flatter myself with the hope of subduing the depressions of grief; I have

B 3

another

another most invincible reason for declining the honour you design me. I am, ALREADY MARRIED. Although I cannot comply with your request respecting my history (neither will you *now* deem it necessary that I should.) I feel, that justice to my own honour, requires that I should inform your Lordship, you have not disgraced yourself by your proffered alliance with my family. Suffice it to say, they are of the first respectability. I have little to boast, except an unsullied reputation. The mysterious seclusion in which you have found me, was the result of choice, and not of necessity. In this country I have no reason to avoid the eye of curiosity, for I am a stranger to its inhabitants: shame never tinged my cheek; for I never violated the principles, or deviated from the practice of virtue.

virtue

More explicit I cannot be ; there are reasons, so powerful, so connected with all my prospects in life, why I should remain in obscurity ; that you will pardon me, if I decline a further explanation. The letters I received from you, I now return ; and that you may speedily forget any attractions your partiality has discovered in my person, and only suffer the impression of my sentiments to remain on your mind, is the sincere wish of

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

LETTER LII.

Lord WOODLEY to Lord ALLFORD.

Harefield, Oct. 179.—

SHE is married! There *is* a being upon earth, who dares possess the person, the heart of Julia St. Laurence! Yes, my friend, she has a husband; she lives but for him; and condemns me to eternal misery. She waits his arrival from a foreign country; she pines in solitude for his absence; and, in anguish counts the tardy hours till his return. Perish the wretch who has been the destroyer of my happiness,—he shall not survive

vive his temerity; by heaven he shall not. I am desperate! my injuries have made me so. She shall suffer an age of martyrdom, for bestowing that heart upon another, which is *mine* by *right*; for there is no other man worthy of her. She shall weep over the laurels of her triumph, and with them shall weave the cypress of despair!

WOODLEY.

LET-

LETTER LIII.

Mrs. VERNON to Lady ALLFORD.

Harefield, Oct. 179—

WOODLEY is frantic ! absolutely frantic. Read my proofs, and then judge for yourself.

Last night, returning from Julia's cottage, with Sir Charles, we perceived, by the light of the moon, a man, at the corner of the park, walking to and fro, in the most violent seeming perturbation. We stopped; we listened, and heard him distinctly exclaim, "Curfed be my stars !

stars ! Shall another possess the being I adore ! Shall I be the sport of an insolent rival ? the tame submissive fool to feed a woman's vanity"—

We advanced ; he proceeded, stopping at intervals, hesitating, and raving like a maniac.

Ought I not to rejoice ? Felicitate me on the victory I have obtained, by my flirtation with Sir Charles, for to that I owe the jealousy of Woodley. He is completely tired of Lady Seymour, that's very clear ! crown me with roses and with myrtle ! for Woodley, the imperious Woodley, is mine for ever !

How severely shall he suffer for the uneasiness he has occasioned me ! think, you already see me ; leading
the

the world in flowry garlands! pre-
eminent in rank! the theme of every
conversation! the oracle of taste! the
arbitress of fashions! and the soul of
dissipation!

Poor Lady Seymour! I shall, notwithstanding, take notice of her, because I like Sir Charles.—The pretty St. Laurence shall be my protégé. She shall write my *billet doux*, assist me in fancying my birth-day dresses; attend me in public; sing at my concerts; read novels to me; and, as she has a talent for scribbling poetry, she shall celebrate my name in all the newspapers. My liveries shall approach those of royalty as nearly as possible; my jewels outblaze the glare of Eastern magnificence; I will be the envy of my own sex, and the idol of mankind!

I mean

I mean this day, to prove my empire ! My toilette has lent its aid ; and I look, like the Paphian divinity ! Sir Charles ! Lady Seymour ! tremble at my approach ! Poor Woodley ! I really begin to commiserate his fate.

I shall leave Harefield next week ;
dear Lady Allford,

Ton Amie,

AMELIA VERNON.

LET-

LETTER LIV.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE to Mrs.
MORETON.

Harefield Forest, 179—

IF it were possible, my dearest friend, that my woes could be augmented, the events of yesterday would render me a degree more wretched, than when I last wrote to you ! I inclose you a copy of a letter, which I received from Lord Woodley, together with my answer. Oh ! my dear Madam, to what a painful confession have I been reduced: yet, by the fortunate adoption of a *feigned name*

name, I have preserved the mystery of my birth and family connections inviolable. This is some alleviation of my affliction ; for, to be recalled from the soil which holds the ashes of my lost husband, or to relinquish the melancholy hopes that he may still exist in some remote part of the world, to return to that spot, where I gave him my fond heart ; where, for the last time, I heard the sound of his celestial voice, bidding me farewell for ever ! would embitter my short days, and inflict pangs, if possible, more keen than those which I now suffer.

Then, should I not be obliged to endure the perpetual insults of my family, for marrying without their knowledge ; for flying from my country, without even satisfying their minds that I was married at all. Alas !

The

The poignancy of reproach, would not so much wound me on my own account; as on *his* whose name is engraved on my sad heart, and never shall be profaned in my hearing.

Wherever he wanders, if he still breathes, he has my prayers for his safety; months have passed away since I ceased my unavailing enquiries; and, as no gleam of hope has yet guided me to any trace of his family or situation; I conclude, dreadful alternative! that he is *no more*!

The widow's dress, which I now wear, shall be that of my whole life; the form of my adored husband, which fancy, unceasingly presents to my agonized gaze; shall never be forgotten, till I freeze, in the gloom of a sepulchre.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear Madam, I find my health hourly decaying, and feel myself quite fatigued, only in writing this short letter. You would think me much altered if you could see me. Grief, like a cankering worm, feeds upon my heart; and will feed, until life itself is consumed.

My dearest friend, once more adieu.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

LETTER LV.

Lord Woodley to JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

Harefield, Oct. 179—

THE lance of fate, which will ere long annihilate your victim, will be merciful, in comparison with the pang you have inflicted! Julia St. Laurence is the wife of another! Then farewell to every phantom of delight; I have nothing to hope for; no prospect, but despair!

To—

To-morrow I depart from Harefield Castle; you will be troubled no more with my persecutions. I shall not long survive your severity; you will perhaps lament my destiny; you will pity my unfortunate sensibility; you will embalm my ashes, with a tear!

Julia, you will see me no more; I will seek, among strangers, the commiseration you deny me; I may find society, esteem, and friendship; I may find women, lovely and susceptible, but alas! I shall not find, a soul like that of Julia St. Laurence!

I do not reproach you, I do not complain; you are too superior a being, to cast away one thought on such an unfortunate as I am!

Farewell! most captivating of women!

men! farewell for ever! Do justice to my passion, to my zeal, to my resignation! and when you meet the darling husband of your heart, tell him, he has not the merit of being singular in his attachment to you. Tell him, all your triumph's; and in the ardent transports of your soul; in the fond moments of delicious confidence; teach him, to revere the victim of your cruelty.

This night I will not sleep! I will haunt the habitation of my tyrant! Fear me not, I am subdued! and will rather perish than offend you. I send you my portrait; keep it; I conjure you, as a relique! It is the pious office of an angel, to weep, over the image of a martyr!

Blessings attend you!

WOODLEY.

LET-

LETTER LVI.

Lora WOODLEY to Lord ALLFORD.

Harefield, Oct. 179—

I Leave Harefield in a day or two :
I am wounded to the soul ! I confess
I did not believe that so much virtue
existed in the mind of woman ! Cer-
tainly I never found an instance of it
in those with whom I have been des-
tined to associate. Perhaps she only
assumes the character to make her sa-
crifice the greater. I shall not give

up the idea, of still humbling her proud heart. She visits London with Mrs. Vernon ! I will hope, I will conquer ! It is too ridiculous to be foiled by simplicity, to be rejected and duped, by a mere novice ; to pine like a weak girl, and waste my life in mortifying despondency ! Her melancholy assists my project ; the moment of grief, when the mind is softened and subdued, is the most favourable, to enforce a new impression ; it shall be my task,

“ To take her, in her heart’s extreme
hate :

“ With curses in her mouth, tears in her
eyes !”

and would to heaven, by her *hus-*
band’s presence, I could add,

“ The

"The bleeding witness of" my "hatred
by."

Farewell, my dear Allford,

Your's truly,

WOODLEY.

C4

LET.

LETTER LVII.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE to Mrs. MORE-

TON.

Harefield, Oct. 1799

SUPPORT me by your counsel!
 Console me by your sympathy! I am
 nearly distracted! Oh! shade of my
 departed husband, sustain me, or I
 perish! Let me pour my miseries into
 the bosom of friendship. I have no
 relations here to comfort me! no
 husband to protect me!

Last night! break not my heart while
 I reveal the fatal story! Last night!
 when

when darkness and silence rendered the time, fit for a scene of horror, overwhelmed with the reflections of the day past; and guided by that extraordinary impulse which makes the human mind eagerly cherish every source of misery. Finding I had no chance of rest, I took up a volume of plays, and involuntarily opened that page of the fatal marriage, where Isabella, says,

“Do I deserve to be this outcast wretch?

“Abandoned thus and lost? But 'tis my lot,

“The will of Heav'n, and I must not complain.”

“Could I forget,

“What I have been, I might the better bear

“What I am destin'd to; I'm not the first

“That have been wretched: but to think how much

“I have been happier!—wild hurrying thoughts

Start

"Start every way from my distracted soul,

"To find out hope, and only meet despair!"

As I paused to wipe away a tear that dimmed my sight; I heard the window of my chamber gently open; and before I had time to shriek, I beheld, kneeling at my feet, the frantic Woodley! he was pale and trembling! I was petrified with horror!

He seized my hand; he bathed it with tears; but he had lost the power of utterance. His eyes were wild and terrible! he listened, and looked around, as though he meant to perpetrate some dreadful deed! At length, taking from his bosom a pistol, he said, in a faltering voice, "Now, Madam, I conjure you to be *just*! release a wretch from misery whose last breath shall be poured forth in prayers for your safety!" I rose; he gently

gently compelled me to resume my seat; roused by fear and despair, I ventured to reproach him, I told him, that his conduct was a bold violation of the rectitude he boasted; and that unless he instantly departed I would alarm my servant. Taught by my example, he grew courageous; smiled at my menace; and throwing his pistol upon the floor, seized me (like a ruffian) in his arms, and bore me shrieking down the stairs, into a room that opened to the road!

I felt a degree of strength unknown to me before; I tore myself from him, and rushed to the adjoining room, where my good old Barnard always slept. I entered, she was not there! Then my terrors were completed, my heart sunk in my bosom, and my only hope rested on the power of language.

guage. "You see before you, said I, "the most unfortunate of women; a widowed wife! a wandering fugitive! a wretch, who wishes not to *live*; but to expire unsullied! You will obtain a short-lived triumph, if you subdue the feeble object of your violence; for I will not, I swear, by all the powers of nature, and of truth, I will not survive dishonour!"

"Julia," replied he, "the violence you complain of, is the result of despair! I am determined to quit this scene of humiliation; but *you* must accompany me. 'Tis in vain you hope to escape, your servant, is by my contrivance detained, feasting, at the Castle; mine only are in waiting, and they dare not disobey me. But this is delaying time, the dawn will defeat my fixed purpose, and blush upon

upon my cowardice ; I am not to be dismayed, or soothed ; I offered *honourable* love, which you disdained !”

“ Could I accept your offer,” I replied ; “ could I forget the darling of my soul ? Could I basely abjure the memory of *Sidney* !” He started, as if he had seen a spectre, and exclaimed, “ was *Sidney* the husband of Julia St. Laurence ! Cursed be the monster, who would disturb the *ashes* of my friend.” “ The *ashes* of your friend,” said I, shivering with horror ! “ Yes Madam,” resumed Lord Woodley, “ he was the associate of my infancy ; the dearest friend of my heart ; but, alas, I saw him *expire* ! I embalmed his grave with the tears of unfeigned regret, and his memory will ever be, the pride of my existence !” My grief was beyond

yond the power of utterance! I had just strength to support myself against the window, when Barnard entered the room. "Merciful Heaven!" said the poor affrighted creature, "what is the matter?" Lord Woodley informed her that he had unfortunately been the messenger of mournful news; and that my agitated appearance, proceeded from his intelligence. "Alas!" said Barnard, "I suspected somewhat extraordinary; by the carriage and the servants, waiting without." I had not strength to reproach Lord Woodley; I entreated him to leave me; he bowed, and departed. I then retired to my chamber, not to rest, but to weep, for my poor Sidney. I will see Lord Woodley once more; to learn all the mournful particulars of *his* fate, who *was* the darling of my soul. Oh!

Madam;

Madam; whither shall I fly, where
find consolation, in this world of af-
fliction?

the room. "Merciful Heaven!"
and the poor afflicted creature.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

"What is the matter?" Lord Wood-
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tunately been the messenger of mourn-
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and departed. I then retired to my
chamber, not to rest, but to weep, for
my poor Sidney. I will see Lord
Woodley once more; to learn all the
particulars of his fate, who
was the darling of my soul. Oh!
Madam;

LETTER LVIII.

*From the SAME to the SAME.**Harefield Forest, Oct. 179—*

I write on the bed of sickness, perhaps of death. Sir Charles Seymour has just sent a physician to visit me : I am forbid to sit up, or even to speak ; my fever is intolerable ; If you do not hear from me soon, conclude that I am *happy* !

JULIA.

LET

LETTER LIX.

Lord WOODLEY to Lord ALLFORD.

Harefield, Oct. 179.—

SHE is dying! Julia is dying! and
and I, yes, I, have been the fatal
means of her destruction! Do not de-
sire me to be patient, do not offer
me consolation to my pangs; I should
deserve the torments of Hell, if I
could look forward to her dissolution
without horror! She cannot live All-
ford! She is delirious!—and I am her
assassin! Abhor me; despise me;
curse me! I leave Harefield to night;
shall I remain here to see the dust
VOL. II, D heaped

heaped on the grave of my victim? Shall I follow to its last home that fair and unpolluted form, bowed to the earth by affliction? Allford! Heaven is all just, and I am a monster!

Meet me in London, I have much business to transact, and a short time to accomplish it in. I know your regard for me, and it is the dearest privilege of friendship, to bathe the wounds of misfortune! Remember, *Julia is spotless!*

WOODLEY.
A kind of sympathetic
fellow, penetrates my soul at the
state of the unfortunate Julia.
The very name thrills through my
heart, where every fibre bears
the image of my departed angel.
Take courage, and be assured I will
not fail to administer all the conso-
lation.

LET-

heaped on the grave of my victim; shall I follow to its last home that fair and unpolluted form, bowed to the earth by affliction? Alford! Heaven is all

LETTER LX.

Meet me in London, I have much business to transact, and a short time

Lord ALLFORD to Lord WOODLEY.

Rose Hill, Oct. 179—

I Will meet you in ten days in London: you have acted too violently, yet be not rash, she may possibly recover. A kind of sympathetic sorrow, penetrates my soul at the fate of the unfortunate Julia. *Julia!* the very name thrills through my heart; where every fibre, bears the image of my departed angel. Take courage, and be assured I will not fail to administer, all the conso-

lation, that friendship can suggest.
You must endeavour to forget her.
Honour demands the effort.

LETTER LXI. ALLFORD.

Mrs. Vernon is Lady Allford.
Hampshire, Oct. 1784.

LORD Woodley sets out to-
morrow; he has business of impor-
tance that demands his presence in
London; I am at no great loss to
guess at the motive of his departure,
which is, doubtless, to prepare every
thing for our marriage.

LET-
We remain here ten days more;
Sir Charles wishes to enjoy the air of
Devonshire as long as the weather
will

tion, that friendship can suggest.
You must endeavour to forget her.
Hence demands the effort.

LETTER LXI.

Mrs. VERNON to Lady ALLFORD.

Harefield, Oct. 179—

LORD Woodley sets out to-morrow; he has business of importance that demands his presence in London; I am at no great loss to guess at the motive of his departure which is, doubtless, to prepare every thing for our marriage.

We remain here ten days more; Sir Charles wishes to enjoy the air of Devonshire as long as the weather

D 3 will

will permit. Julia has been, and still is dangerously ill; Sir Charles seems deeply concerned at her situation; and Lady Seymour not less afflicted at the departure of Lord Woodley.

This morning I visited the invalid, her fever was violent; but she looked as beautiful as ever! I really wish she was more known; that I might introduce her, in the sphere she would embellish. She is perhaps destined for a better world! Poor young woman! I am really very sorry for her. Though I have scarcely any hopes of her recovery! I die to see you, to consult about my furniture, my liveries, jewels, carriages, &c. &c. I shall have a *vis-à-vis* certainly. There is nothing so disagreeable as a family coach; where half a dozen people crowd home from the Opera,

or Ranelagh together;—no, a *vis-à-vis* is more quiet and comfortable, and one can only then be plagued with *one* person at a time.

Lady Seymour is falling away to a skeleton, and Sir Charles, as gradually *falls* off in his attentions towards her. I make no doubt but before the end of the winter, I shall again reduce him to the meek obedience of a *cecisbeo*, he is quite as well-looking as Lord Woodley, and far more zealous in his *devoirs* to the all-powerful sex. I shall make wonderful alterations, and reformati^ons too, in my next winter's arrangements. Time is too precious to be thrown away. I shall totally relinquish Mrs. Horace's *conversations*, and learned people are so un-

interesting, and so stupid! besides, I never know what to say to them; I think literature only fit for old pedants, who have no pleasure in life; but that of poring over musty folios. Then, Mrs. Horace is so conceited, and thinks, because she has the approbation of the *literati*, that she is to place herself upon a footing with women of rank; ridiculous! what do I care for her talents; I never read her books; and as to her conversation, I can never comprehend what she is talking about.

Adieu, if Julia dies, I suppose we shall instantly depart; if not, you shall hear from me again soon.

Dear Lady Allford,

Yours,

AMELIA VERNON.

LET-

LETTER LXII.

Mrs. MORETON to JULIA ST. LAU-

RENCE.

Scarborough, Oct. 179—

MY dearest Julia, you are danger-
ously ill, and no friend near you, to
watch over and console you! Yet I will
not suppose that Lady Seymour, or
Mrs. Vernon, will refuse the gentle
offices of humanity; or neglect to
administer every healing balm to your
affliction!

I will wait until the arrival of the
next post, when, if you are not bet-
ter,

ter, I will instantly fly to you, Mr. Moreton, who had the good fortune to snatch you from the tempestuous ocean, when only excited by the common impulse of humanity; who could risk his own life to preserve your's, before he knew your virtues! will not hesitate to protect you, under the conviction, that you are perfectly deserving of his zeal!

Indeed, my sweet friend, you are afflicted with a degree of severity, that makes me almost arraign the justice of Heaven!

It grieves the eye of philanthropy to behold the good so frequently the objects of unceasing persecution; while hardened villainy, and unblushing dissimulation, revel in the possession of every enjoyment, and prof-

Look

titude

titute the gifts of Heaven, to the worst and most degrading purposes! But the will of the Supreme is omnipotent! and the mysteries of fate impeterrable! we wander in darkness, and our paths are strewn with thorns!

If you recover strength sufficient, accept Mrs. Vernon's invitation, and accompany her to London. I hope I shall meet you there, for I long to see you restored to your family, and to the rank in society, which your virtues demand: since the object of your adoration, the cause of your disobedience is removed; they can have no excuse for farther severity; and I am convinced, that the joy they will experience, in finding you still *alive*, will check the force of resentment, and wholly obliterate the remembrance of your rashness.

Look

Look forward to that happy period; collect all your strength; exert all your fortitude; and triumph over the malice of your enemies!

Respecting Lord Woodley; think of him no more;—he is not worthy of a moment's consideration.

Be composed my charming friend, I hope Heaven will not be so unrelenting, as to persecute you further.

Believe me,

Your affectionately,

ANNA MORETON.

I have obeyed your commands. I have disclaimed from every human being the conduct of Lord Woodley, whose

LETTER LXIII.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE to Mrs. MOR-
TON.

Harefield Forest, Oct. 179—

MY fever is somewhat abated, and I am permitted, for a few hours, to leave my bed; I employ them in thanking you, my dearest friend, for your solicitude, and in informing you, how much I am indebted to the humanity of Sir Charles Seymour.

I have obeyed your commands, and concealed from every human being the conduct of Lord Woodley, whose

whose last interview plunged me into a sea of misery, beyond my power to struggle through!

Upon his leaving the cottage, my poor old Barnard led me to my chamber; where we found the pistol which had so terrified me! it was *not* loaded! — Lord Woodley was too deeply practised in baseness to risk meeting the punishment he deserved from an insulted woman. His *finesse* was an additional proof of his horrid intentions; I look back upon the escape I have had; and though, like the poor mariner, dashed upon a bleak and barren rock, I am still contending with the storm, I behold with a momentary delight the gulph, that must have overwhelmed and swallowed me for ever.

The

The physician who has resided at the Castle ever since I was first supposed to be in danger, never left the cottage during two days and a night. Sir Charles remained with him, and Barnard says, his attention was exemplary! this morning, Sir Charles requested permission to see me, having been informed, that I had leave to sit up: he was admitted, but the change in my appearance so deeply interested his feeling generous heart, that during the ten minutes he remained in my chamber, he scarcely uttered a syllable. Indeed, he deserves a wife, more capable of doing justice to the excellence of his mind!

I have seldom seen Mrs. Vernon; and Lady Seymour has not once honoured me with a visit; I shall, however

ever, if I recover, follow your advice, and accompany the former to London, I have a distant relation there; I will see him, and entreat him to use his influence with my father; and, if possible, prevail on him to forget my unfortunate marriage; and once more receive the penitent to his bosom, whose miseries have sufficiently expiated her crimes!

The name of my relation is Howard; he has lately made the tour of Europe with a young Nobleman, whose title I do not recollect; whose father he esteemed, and to whom he promised, (when dying) a continuance of friendship to his son.

My strength is exhausted; that
Heaven

Heaven may repay you ten-fold for
all your kindness, is the wish of

Your's faithfully

And affectionately,

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

VOL. II. ELET-

of her husband's death, which lately reached her, from a person who saw him expire, was too severe a shock for her exquisitely sensible mind, and I am grieved to say I do not think she will long survive him. There is a mystery about her situation that naturally excites an interest; but I would

LETTER LXIV.

*Sir CHARLES SEYMOUR to Lord ALL-
FORD.*

MY dear Lord, the melancholy scenes I have lately witnessed, must plead an excuse for my silence. I have been employed in the mournful task of attending the amiable recluse whom I mentioned in my former letters, she had been dangerously ill of a violent fever, and is yet scarcely recovered; her health has been for some time gradually declining, but the news

of

of her husband's death, which lately reached her, from a person who saw him expire, was too severe a shock for her exquisitely sensible mind, and I am grieved to say, I do not think she will long survive him. There is a mystery about her situation that naturally excites an interest; but I would rather die than offend her delicacy by any ill-timed curiosity. She is a lovely woman, and my heart bleeds, when I declare, she often reminds me of what Lady Seymour *was*, when I first knew her! you will be surprized at my saying what *she was*! but your astonishment would cease, were you to behold her, what she *now is*! the infectious spirit of depravity, has wholly changed her; she is scarcely one degree more amiable than her instructress Mrs. Vernon, in whom I may venture to declare, exist all the

vices, all the blackest vices that can contaminate the heart of woman! she is preparing a nuptial bed for the unsuspecting Woodley, polluted by the licentious caresses of *another*! I would snatch the fair mask from the deluding Syren; but he is not worthy of my interference; and, such is the ingratitude of the world, *he* would not thank me, and all the legions of deception would deem me a meddling officious fool for my pains.

Lady Seymour is blinded by the artifice of Mrs. Vernon, she cherishes a serpent in her bosom which has *already stung her*! and which will wind about her heart, until every part of it is infected with its poison.

Mrs. Vernon has invited Mrs. St. Laurence to visit her in London, she shall

shall not, no, she shall not be sacrificed by such a woman; her grief her situation, claims the sympathy of every feeling mind, and the protection of every man of honour.

She shall accompany Lady Seymour, and perhaps her amiable qualities of soul, will, by contrasting, counteract the pernicious example of Mrs. Vernon. Woodley is gone, and we now only wait the recovery of Mrs. St. Laurence.

My dear Allford,

Your's,

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

LETTER LXV.

Lord ALLFORD to Sir CHARLES SEY-

MOURN.

Rose Hill, Nov. 1794

SET your heart at rest respecting your friend Woodley; he never will be the husband of Emily Vernon. Believe me, when I assure you, I am certain he never will. She has suffered the rogate wreath with which she held him to fade by her delay; and he now looks back with horror on its withered fragments. I did not require your account of Mrs. St. Laurence;

the

the interest with which she inspired you, was alone her panegyric. I know the conscious delight an honourable mind experiences, in the office of rescuing innocence from the power of depravity; and at the same time I am convinced, that a worthy object, *only*, can justly claim such an interference.

I am impatient to be presented to Mrs. St. Laurence, and when I arrive in London, shall hope to be gratified in my wish. Yet, I almost dread the honour I solicit. The name of Julia is dear to me! and weary as I am of domestic broils, and perpetual altercations, I shall perhaps find the fair stranger too lovely, to be beheld with indifference! I applaud your resolution of snatching her from the fangs of the *barpy*, Vernon! it is highly meritorious to preserve such a gem

gem, if only to save human nature from the obloquy of unvarying frailty.

I will not offer Mrs. St. Laurence the attentions of Lady Allford. The arrogance of her manner, and the overbearing imperiousness of her temper, would only add to the depression of mind, too visible in that amiable woman, who is, already, as I am informed, almost subdued by her misfortunes. Lady Seymour must be her friend, she has, in fact, a sensible heart, though it is hidden with a temporary disguise, which reason and reflection will in time cast off.

Now, Sir Charles, let me caution you against the fascinations of beauty; and recommend to you the exercise of the philosophy you boast, but
which

which may be subservient to the power
of new and rare accomplishments. I
shall not be in town till December,
having made a party at Rose Hill for
the hunting season. I shall leave them
for ten days only, and then I return to
Devonshire for three months, where
I shall, at least, be quiet if not happy.
Lady Allford passes the whole winter
in Portland Place; congratulate me,
and believe me,

Your's, truly,

ALLFORD.

Now, Sir Charles, let me caution
you against the fatigues of beauty;
and recommend to you the exercise
of the philosophy you boast, but
which

LETTER LXVI.

*Lady SEYMOUR to Lady ALLFORD.**Harefield, Nov. 179—*

I languish for Portman-square, and for your society! the country is quite insupportable! not a leaf to be seen, not a flower to decorate the frozen earth, except a few miserable ever-greens, like our friend Mrs. Vernon, blooming in decay, and flaunting their gaudy beauties, frost-nipped by the hand of nature. She is grown perfectly ridiculous, and conscious of her fading charms, EXORTS from all mankind

mankind the same praise, which she formerly received, with as much confidence, as though it were a voluntary contribution ! Sir Charles is more sentimental than ever ! I think within these few days, he seems to watch me with an eye of suspicion ; mixed with an affected complaisance, which bears the semblance of some hidden scheme to entrap me. I fear he would be silly enough to fancy his honour injured if I made the slightest *faux pas* ; it is really a stigma upon the high court of fashion, that *one* woman is allowed to have a dozen caprices, while she has an *obliging* husband, who does not trouble his head about her little glibly amusements ; while *another*, because she is wedded to an honourable *Argus*, is, for the *first* offence, driven from society, and made the subject of impertinent conversation ;

but

but you know, my dear Lady Allford, we must keep up an appearance of decorum, otherwise women of inferior rank, who boast only the gothic perfections of talents and sensibility, would obtrude themselves into notice; and leave us of higher birth, quite in the mists of obscurity.

Woodley, whose company contributed, not a little, to make time pass tolerably, has been gone some days. Mrs. St. Laurence is nearly recovered, and we shall leave the dreary domains of Harefield, in the course of the ensuing week.

Adored for ever be the regions of sublime fashion! give me the broad glare of a birth-night ball, and I will readily relinquish the romantic shades of retirement, to little minds, only
formed

formed for oblivion ! Mrs. St. Lawrence, though she will be lost in our assemblies, will prove an excellent foil, for beings of a brighter polish ; I shall endeavour to introduce her in a mysterious character, and pass her upon the world as a woman of distinction, educated in retirement, and privately married to a person of rank, absent in the service of his country. Though I have some doubts, whether she will enter into the spirit of the deception, for she seems quite a conscientious Lady. Sir Charles is really absurd in his conduct about her, and once was so ridiculous, as to bid *me* make her my model ! I told him I should, when I meant to appear at a masquerade in the character of a Magdalen ! he was highly offended at my pleasantry, and has not since

ventured to name her in my hearing.

Adieu; until I embrace you in the vortex of splendour!

FRANCES SEYMOUR.

MY dearest Julia, as I should have reproached myself for any want of vigilance, where your happiness was the object of my labour; in order to prevent the awkward necessity of soliciting Mr. Howard's protection, I desired Mr. Moreton to write to him; to inform him of your being still alive, in England, a widow, and impatient to return to your native country. Be assured, my amiable friend

LETTER LXVII.

Mrs. MORETON to JULIA ST. LAW-
RENCE.

Scarborough, Nov. 179—

MY dearest Julia, as I should have reproached myself for any want of vigilance, where your happiness was the object of my labour; in order to spare you the awkward necessity of soliciting Mr. Howard's protection, I desired Mr. Moreton to write to him; to inform him of your being still alive, in England, a widow, and impatient to return to your native country. Be assured, my amiable friend

friend, the disclosure was made, with all possible delicacy ; and the answer has been equal to our most sanguine wishes.

I enclose a copy of his letter to Mr. Moreton. You need not apprehend any reproaches from your relations: under the protection of Mr. Howard, you will not feel the loss of your father ; who, (I grieve to tell you the sad news,) left Philadelphia immediately after your departure, and has not since been heard of. He is probably in England ; the motive of his voyage was to recal his wandering child—he will, I *trust*, I *hope*, yet find her.

Mr. Howard leaves Bath next month, though in a dangerous state of health. By that time you will be
in

in London, and we shall be preparing to quit Scarborough. Mr. Moreton is perfectly recovered, and joins with me in the best wishes for your health and happiness.

Adieu, my sweet friend,

Faithfully and unalterably

Your's,

ANNA MORETON.

LETTER LXVIII.

*Copy of Mr. HOWARD's Letter to Mr.
MORETON.*

SIR,

Bath, Nov. 179—

THE intelligence you have had the goodness to communicate to me, demands my thanks, for I do not remember any event of my life, that gave me so much pleasure.

The amiable woman you have so generously protected, is no stranger to me, though I have never seen her since her infancy. She may command my services, my friendship,
my

my esteem; and the instant I arrive in London, I shall beg to be her guardian, until I can find a safe opportunity of forwarding her wishes, by restoring her to her family. I have found the child, I will now endeavour to discover the abode of the father! who, (I am informed, by letters from America,) departed for England, not long after the elopement of his daughter; most likely the idea that she perished at sea, has prevented all researches; and, as it was reported, that not a passenger survived the dreadful wreck; he is, probably, now lamenting her virtues in solitude; or perhaps beyond the power of mourning for her fate.

Let her not despond, let her look forward to a reward for all her sufferings, and assure her, that I should think my whole fortune well bestowed

in the pious labour, of restoring an amiable woman to the arms of a venerable and disconsolate father.

The instant I arrive in town, I will do myself the honour of waiting on you; and of soliciting the address of my fair kinswoman.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

EDWARD HOWARD.

LET-

LETTER LXIX.

Lady ALLFORD to Lady SEYMOUR.

Portland Place, Nov. 179—

MY charming! lively Seymour,
I am expiring to see you! I have
announced your departure from Hare-
field *monastery*, in half the houses
where we visit; but I did not men-
tion *the* Mrs. St. Laurence; because,
(pardon me) but it is quite impossible
for me to receive a person of *doubtful*
reputation, under *my* roof; unless
she comes with the sanction of her
husband; for you know a woman's
character depends not on her *own*
conduct

conduct, but her husband's complaisance. You are imposed upon by the novelty of seeing an innocent blushing young woman; you have not beheld such a phenomenon for some years, consequently believe, she is a being of supernatural mould. Take my word she is some citizen's daughter; some romantic *Miss*, escaped from her father's CHATEAU at Mile End; a seduced milliner, or pretty *femme de chambre*; dismissed from her place, for rivalling some antiquated Duchesses; the candour of my nature, will not suffer me to think *worse* of her; though I confess, her story has a very suspicious appearance, and such as would authorize the most decided opinion *against* her.

She cannot visit me, *indeed* she cannot; and I think Mrs. Vernon will
will

will scarcely venture to associate with her ; if she does, she will lose much of her celebrity, for prudent *exterior* ! you comprehend me Seymour ! she may give the poor creature a room in her house ; and when she is alone, a place at her table ; but to make her a constant companion, will be preposterous ! I am told, she plays music well, and draws, and writes poetry ; she cannot therefore be at a loss for amusement, and such, as will be congenial to her nature ; for she would not find any opportunities of improving her *refined* talents in our societies.

Lord Allford does not come to town these three weeks ; oh ! that I could make them three centuries ! but I will not be idle ; believe me
every

every moment shall have its occupation of delight!

My *Faro* Bank opens to-morrow night, all the world will come! three hundred cards are out! "Lady Allford at home!" the exhilarating proclamation will rush through the regions of taste with the swiftness of lightning! does it not strike thy torpid mind, and reproach it for its apathy?

Adieu, my dear Frances, I am impatient to see you, and to assure you, how sincerely

I am,

Your friend,

CLARA ALLFORD.

LETTER LXX.

Lord WOODLEY to Lord ALLFORD.

May Fair, Dec. 179.

THREE days in the atmosphere of London have restored me to reason! I have scarcely thought of Harefield; and blessed my stars ten thousand times, for my escape from bondage. You see, my dear Allford, it is no very difficult undertaking to break the fetters of a *romantic* passion, which is only inspired by the pure air of the mountains! cherished by the odours of enamelled meadows!
and

and sanctioned by the pastoral simplicity of the children of *nature*. Unhappy beings! how I pity them! they are the very cart horses of the creation; formed to labour for *our* use; to drag their heavy souls through a life of toil, and, when worn out in our service, to sink unnoticed to their native clod! while *we*, of higher blood, race full speed, over the smooth course of delight; the wonder of the multitude, the pride of pedigree, and the ornaments of the pleasurable scene! Allford; being formed to command, I *will* be obeyed; I *would* be omnipotent! but, that the British constitution under which I was born, and still exist, would check my presumption, and teach me, that the *peasant*, has his equal *right* to justice with the *peer*, and is armed by the laws of his country

try against the threats of innovation, in whatever shape they may assail him !

Thus am I obliged to check the ardour of my soul, compelled to restrain my power over mankind, by the gothic rules of freedom and humanity, and forced to curb my heart which pants for the exercise of unlimited subjection ; since I cannot tyrannise over my vassals, I will over the *women* ; they shall, at least feel my dominion, and be subservient to my pleasures. I have once felt the merciless despotism of a female ruler, and the rest of the sex, shall do penance for her crimes !

Mrs. St. Laurence arrives in town this week ; I will meet her, not only with indifference, but contempt !—

How

How naturally a man hates a woman for her insolence, when he ceases to be the slave of her beauty ! if you wish to be happy, waste not your life in obscurity—solitude only cherishes despondency ; and from thence there is but one step forward to complete *despair*.

The widow, the ridiculous Em'ly Vernon, will be highly incensed against me when she returns, for I shall see her *no more* ; she is really too tiresome with her affectation of girlish vivacity ; if she would wear a black hood and conform to the *costume* of respectable old age, I should perhaps entertain a caprice for her ; but while, at forty, *she* binds her brow with *roses*, I must beg leave to become a *volunteer* for the *willow* !

Farewell

Farewell, my dear Allford—quit the shepherd's crook, and pastoral reed; and adopt the dice box! seven's the *main*! but while you continue at Rose-hill, believe me, your *chance* is—nothing!

Remember the maxim of Rochefoucault. "The happiness, or misery of men, depend no less on their *temper*, than fortune."

Wishing you a speedy change of sentiments, I remain,

Your's

WOODLEY.

LET-

LETTER LXXI.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE *to* Mr. MORE-
TON.

Harefield, Dec. 179—

GRACIOUS Heaven! my father
in England! and in search of his
wretched daughter! my heart bleeds
with contrition; and every vein throbs
to embrace him! will he, (do you
think,) forgive his unhappy child?
will he suffer my repentant tears, to
bathe his wounded bosom? Oh! I
am lost, I am at length subdued by
my affliction! if I do not find him
speedily, I shall loose the power of
seeking him: to see him once more,
to kiss his withered hands raised in
bene-

benediction over me; to behold a faint ray of sunshine beam on his white hairs, and illumine his path-way to the tomb, would repay me for all my sorrows. Perhaps he ceases to exist; yes! yes! I have bowed him to the dust by my unkindness, my crime, is not to be forgiven! oh! to leave *such* a father! bending with age and infirmity; to tear from him his *only* consolation! ungrateful as I was, where shall I find the balm to reconcile me to *myself*? I will search for him unfriended and alone; I will traverse the wide world like a pilgrim, in poverty and affliction; I will either clasp him to my aching bosom, or breathe my last prayers over his ashes! oh, my father! my adored, my injured father! your Julia is not lost, she still lives to implore your forgiveness; to watch over your declining years; to wait on
you

you with tender assiduity; and to embalm your grave with the tears of filial affection. Am I, worthy of his tenderness? I, who left my home, disguised, and fearful, like a guilty wretch! no! he only seeks me, to reproach me; to shew me my *own* deformity; and then leave me to the pangs I have deserved to suffer. But he shall not fulfill his task of severity; I will clasp his knees in the agony of conscious misery; I will awaken his heart to pity; I will recall to his memory, all the hours of infant innocence, when I used to hang about his neck, and share his kisses;—I will not, *I will not* be forgotten; he *shall* know me for his *own*; his Julia! his poor distracted child! I am not so altered, but he will see, in my pale visage, the features of my mother! for *her* sake, he will love me, her spirit,

spirit in the realms of peace, will hover over and sustain me, in that trying moment. I do not wish to protract a miserable existence; I only pant for the forgiveness of my parent, and will then with joy, prepare to meet my long lost *Sidney*! to meet him! is he not in Heaven? Can a disobedient child hope for happiness *hereafter*?

The instant Mr. Howard arrives, I will fly to him; we will *find* this *darling* father, we will implore his returning affection. Under the care of so honourable a guardian, I would travel to the farthest part of the universe, without fear or mistrust. I hope Mr. Howard will not mention my past errors; a sensible mind does not require the chastisement of reproach, its own reflections are a sufficient

G

ficient source of punishment. Do I deserve such accumulated sorrows? Yes! yes!—oh Sidney, oh! my mother! look down with the benignity of blessed spirits, and pour some consolation on my breaking heart!

I really fear my reason will forsake me: I am strangely indisposed! a deep gloom hangs over all my faculties! the pains and pleasures of life seems to mingle in one mass of doubtful obscurity. SUPREME director of the universe yet let me preserve my intellects, if, but to deprecate thy anger! and to obtain the forgiveness of my offended father!

Dearest and best of women! sympathize with me. Indeed, I am very, very wretched; you will scarcely be able to read my letter, the words are so

so blotted with my tears! the weary
 EXILE torn from his friends, driven
 by relentless fortune on the mercy of
 the hard judging world, subdued by
 affliction, DIES! and is HAPPY! But
 there is no grave for ME!—no pros-
 pect of repose; no narrow dusty pal-
 let, where, chilled by the wintry blast,
 my poor bosom shall moulder, all its
 griefs forgotten; no, no, I must live;
 live to endure the pangs of a feverish
 conscience! yet I might *escape*; the
 power is given to mortals. I might
 break the corroding agonizing chain!
 —But then! —HEREAFTER—! my
 brain begins to burn!—my friend,
 farewell! will you pity, will you re-
 member

Dear self and best of women! I am
 JULIA ST. LAURENCE.
 very wretched; you will scarcely be-
 lieve me when I tell the words are
 true.

beg one, and you had not patience to
 pursue your journey. I now see you
 again treading the flowery path of
 pleasure; beware, or you may find a
 weed to poison all your prospects.

LETTER LXXII.

Your opinion of mankind is equally
 Lord ALLFORD to Lord WOODLEY.

Rose Hill, Dec. 1791.

THERE is nothing so likely to
 harmonize a wandering imagination, as
 a serious romantic passion; the bare
 idea, that the mind is impressed with
 the perfection of an amiable object,
 affords some hope, that virtue, wears
 at least a pleasing semblance, and me-
 rits our admiration. I really began
 to think your esteem for Mrs. St.
 Laurence, would prompt you to ren-
 der yourself worthy of her regard;
 but the road to amendment is a rug-
 ged

ged one, and you had not patience to pursue your journey. I now see you again treading the flowry path of pleasure; beware, or you may find a weed to poison all your prospects.

Your opinion of mankind is equally erroneous with your idea of women. Nature and truth shudder at your sentiments of the difference between man and man. *Education* is every thing; take the highest born offspring of luxury, and rear him in a cottage; conceal from him the supposed supremacy of rank, and you will prove his intellects as confined, as those of the poorest peasant. To what do we owe our useful knowledge, and that proficiency in the arts and sciences which place us so forward in the opinion of Europe? Not to the learning or labours of the *Nobility*, but

to the spontaneous efforts of native
genius, and the weary toils of the
industrious mechanic! you say, you
were *born* to rule your vassals! their
humble origin, places them in a situ-
ation to *obey*; but that is the effect of
chance, not *right*. Reflect that the
meanest child of labour, is the off-
spring of the same *soil*, cherished by
the same *sun*, and as sensible to the
changes of *season*, as you are; there
he is your *equal*! but in the sensibili-
ties of nature, he is your *superior*!

That you are restored to your usual
vivacity, rejoices me! that you have
relinquished your pursuits respecting
the charming Mrs. St. Laurence,
gives me equal pleasure; when I
consider the contents of your last let-
ter, not because I think her merit
undeserving of every sacrifice, but
because

because, I now know the inconstancy of your nature, and the impossibility of attaching it even to an angel: *sublime*

As to the latter part of your letter, and the ridicule with which you affect to treat my way of thinking, pray spare yourself the trouble of writing any more upon the subject. In the first place, because I am resolved never to alter my sentiments; and in the second, because you remind me of those, of whom Boileau speaks, when he says, "*Ceux qui, parlant beau coup ne disent jamais rien*."

I shall go to town for a few days only, I would not go at all, but to look after my character. Your's has been lost so long, that the search would be quite fruitless. Your pleasant animadversions on my pastoral life,

life, amuse me, more than I can describe; but remember what GAY remarks,—“ In *love* we are *all* fools alike!” I am indeed surprized, that in drawing my portrait, you did not perceive some resemblance of yourself; or was your late dream of passion so horrible, so shadowed with guilt, that your conscience forbid you to recollect it?

Pursue your course,—you will repent in time, and own the reasonable doctrines,

Of your friend,
fatiguing for my health.

ALLFORD.

I am at present with Lady Sey-
mour, who is very kind to me. Sir
Charles has during the four days
Glad been travelling. LET
He made a
point

life, amuse me, more than I can de-
 termine; but remember what Gay re-
 marks—"In love we are all fools
 alike!" I am indeed surprised that
 in drawing my portrait, you did not

LETTER LXXIII.

perceive some resemblance of your-
 self; or was your late dream of bar-
 bary too strong upon you? I am
 glad that your portrait should be
 so like me.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE to MRS. MORE.

Portman-square, Dec. 179—

AFTER a slow and cautious pro-
 gress, I am at length arrived in Lon-
 don; so weak, and so depressed, that
 I begin to fear my journey was too
 fatiguing for my health.

I am at present with Lady Sey-
 mour, who is very *civil* to me. Sir
 Charles, has, during the four days
 we have been travelling, evinced the
 tenderness of a brother. He made a
 point

point of my declining Mrs. Vernon's invitation; indeed I should not like to be present at her marriage with Lord Woodley; my heart would reproach me for deceiving *her*, and concealing *his* treachery. I shall avoid his society as much as possible; and as soon as Mr. Howard comes to town, request the protection of his female relations.

How ardently do I pant for an *éclaircissement* of my situation, for the embraces of my respected father, and my return to my native country! This morning I was presented to the wealthy Lady Allford! if size could give a person consequence, she might indeed be termed a *great* woman; though some years past forty, she was dressed with the simplicity of a girl of fifteen, and assumed the infantine

fine playfulness of a perfect baby. I
 was disgusted with her affectation of
 good breeding: she treated me with
 an air of protection, infinitely more
 mortifying than total contempt. She
 was distantly polite, and laboriously
 condescending; extremely inquisi-
 tive, and at the same time wholly in-
 attentive to my answers. On my en-
 tering the room, she seemed to over-
 look me, and for several minutes
 stood with her back towards me,
 talking on various trifling subjects,
 with Lady Seymour. At length,
 turning round, and staring at me for
 a considerable time, with her eye-
 brows drawn up, and her arms hang-
 ing as though they did not belong to
 her, she addressed Lady Seymour in
 the following words:—
 "My dear Frances, is this the un-
 fortunate

fortunate young woman, your recommendation to my notice, in so many of your letters? Poor thing! she looks very ill indeed! you had better provide her a cheap lodging, at Brompton, or Kentish Town: the air of our *sphere*, will not, at all agree with her!" then half concealing a malicious smile, she concluded "well my dear Seymour, you will come this evening? tell Mrs. Vernon I die to meet her! and to congratulate her on her triumph over Woodley; though he *was*, last night, saying fine things, and dangling from room to room after Mrs. Tankerville! but you must not tell her, though all the world remarked it." Having finished her mischievous insinuation, she sailed out of the room, without even deigning to look at me.

PICTURE OF MODERN TIMES. 109

BLIND, bluish, ye dull, ye insolently great!

Who bend the child of sorrow to the earth!

Who spurn, with taunts, the dignity of
worth,

And vainly vaunt the partial gifts of fate!

Though *chance* has made ye known, and *for-*

tune, blind,

Smiled on the hour when ignorance was born!

And though her trappings gay, your brows
adorn,

Ye cannot boast **NOBILITY OF MIND!**

The **SUN BEAMS**, gild the **ALPINE** *Chiffs* of

SNOW,

Still, are they dreary, comfortless for-

lorn!

Unfelt, the radiance of the golden glow!

That mocks their tow'ring beauties, as in
scorn!

So **POMP**, its *useless* lustre scatters wide,

So **GENUS FREEZES**, near the **SONS OF**

PRIDE!

ed out of the room, without even

deigning to look at me.

Lady

As Lady Seymour then approached me with an air of solemn superiority; "St. Laurence," said she, "you must mind never to repeat anything you hear; you have not been used to the society of people of fashion; and perhaps don't know, that by *secrecy* only, we support any degree of respectability. The vulgar have no idea of *our* refinement; and would place all sorts of horrid constructions on our most innocent amusements. Don't you think Lady Allford charming? she is the best bred woman in town, considering she is of *low* extraction! I have heard, that her grandfather was a grocer in the city! 'tis not therefore astonishing that he left his family a *plum*!" this wretched attempt at wit, though at the expence of a friend, really shocked me, and made me see Lady Seymour in a new character.

There

There is certainly contamination in these regions of splendour! my old Barnard is grown a coquet; and instead of her brown camlet gown, and round cap, now wears a muslin jacket and petticoat; her hair powdered, and a small beaver riding hat! she says, that all *femmes de chambers* dress in that style, to distinguish them from the *canaille*!

Adieu my dear Madam,

Affectionately your's,

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

LET

LETTER LXXIV.

*The SAME to the SAME.**Portman-square, Dec. 1794.*

I HAVE been, these three days, confined to Lady Seymour's dressing-room, so much indisposed, that I have not seen any company except Lord Woodley, who, presuming, on what he calls, "the privilege of friendship," unannounced made me a visit. He is all vivacity: he danced, sang, and talked nonsense like a parrot. Spoke with rapture of Mrs. Tankerville (whom I have never seen) ridiculed the vanity of Mrs. Vernon; the

fenti-

sentiment of Lady Seymour; the vulgarity of Lady Allford, and the good nature of Sir Charles; asked me "how I passed my time in Lady Seymour's absence? Whether I had ever been at the Opera? When I intended to return to my rural habitation? How long I meant to wear my cypress garland? and whether I did not feel very awkward in my *new* sphere of society?" To all these questions I made no reply. "What, dumb! my pretty Julia?" said he, "or is your fancy engaged in composing a sonnet to the memory of *past* happiness, or an epithalamium on my intended marriage?" I could not bear his unfeeling conversation; and, without ceremony, left the room. Report says, he is going to Naples, to break his engagement with Mrs. Vernon; he boasts of having bribed his physician, to *save* his health

health requires the air of Italy; I do not think Mrs. Vernon *knows* of his intentions, for she seems *very happy*!

Sir Charles and Lady Seymour are going to Lady Allford's assembly. Lord Allford comes to town to-morrow; I shall employ myself this quiet evening, (for I shall be left quite alone,) in writing to Mr. Howard, in enquiring all the particulars respecting my adored father, at whose feet I long to throw my errors and my sorrow.

Mrs. Vernon has requested me to compose some verses on her arrival in town. The idea is too absurd! if I possessed the power of invoking the muses I certainly should not profane it, by so servile a degradation. When at Harefield, she obtained a copy of a

few

few lines I had written there; and to my great astonishment, on the following day read them before me, to Sir Charles and Lord Woodley, as her *own composition*! they were not worth claiming; neither could I think of sacrificing a friend, because she displayed a little instance of deceit, in fact, highly flattering to my poor abilities.

I am desired to assist Lady Seymour in placing her diamonds; therefore must, for the present, relinquish the more pleasing task of grateful esteem.

Adieu, my dear Madam, I am in better spirits than I have been for some time; I will resume my pen when Lady Seymour is dressed.

Lady Seymour wishes me to go with her to all the places of public amusement, but I shall certainly decline her solicitation; for two reasons. In the first place, my state of mind will not suffer me to enjoy any scene of gaiety; and in the second, as I am not in a situation to incur expences, I am too proud to lay myself under obligations, which I shall never be able to repay. Poor Lady Seymour! she is a lovely woman; she deserves to be happy; but her passion for play, destroys all her prospects of felicity; Mrs. Vernon's *Faro bank* has already exhausted her purse of two thousand pounds, which Sir Charles allowed her for the amusements of the winter, and she is the victim of her own reproaches, every hour of her existence. I wish I had any money to offer her;

but,

but, alas ! my heart is denied its *only* gratification ; by that poverty, which deprives me of the power to render others happy. Sir Charles, is too tender an husband to reproach her ; though he sees, with a breaking heart, the ravages which dissipation daily makes on the health and beauty of his misguided wife. It would be impertinent in me to interfere ; but my affliction is extreme, when I reflect on the impending ruin, that seems to threaten this worthy family. I was made acquainted with the secret of their derangement by Mrs. Vernon ; who is less attentive, and less frequent in her visits, than usual. I with Lady Seymour could be prevailed upon to return to Harefield, I would attend her with pleasure ; and would joyfully devote every moment of my life, to

serve and to amuse her. She has a brilliant mind, which is only slightly tarnished by the deceptive clouds that surround her; one lucid moment of reflection, would restore her to all her original splendour! if you knew her; you would acknowledge that she is a charming woman; and by *your* advice, I think she might become a *happy* one.

I wait with impatience for the arrival of Mr. Howard; you shall hear from me, the instant he comes to town. I know you are interested in my fate, and I am bound by gratitude to make you acquainted with every event that promises pleasure, or threatens misfortune; the former, you will participate; the latter, you will lighten; then rest assured of my perfect

fect esteem and sincerity, when I subscribe myself, faithfully

Your's, ever,

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

I wait with impatience for the arrival of Mr. Howard; you shall hear from me the instant he comes to town. I know you are interested in my fate, and I am bound by gratitude to make you acquainted with every event that promises pleasure, or presents misfortune: the former, you will participate; the latter, you will lighten: then rest assured of my perfect

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LET-

LETTER LXXV.

The SAME to the SAME.

Portman-square, Dec, 179—
DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE, this instant, received a short note from Mr. Howard, he is arrived in town, and I fly to see him. Lady Seymour lends me her carriage after it has taken her to the Opera; I am all impatience. Congratulate me on having at last, some hope of repose; though I do not, in *this world*, expect happiness.

I have only time to say, I am,

Your's, affectionately,

JULIA ST. LAURENCE.

LET-

LETTER LXXVI.

Sir CHARLES SEYMOUR to Mrs.
MORETON.

Portman-square, Jan. 179

KNOWING that you are the particular friend of Mrs. St. Laurence; I lament the necessity of informing you of her alarming situation! she is incapable of writing; and I believe totally insensible of her own danger. A villain has reduced her to the most alarming extremity; but he is punished for his temerity.

Yours affectionately
JULIA ST. LAURENCE

Yesterday

Yesterday evening Mrs. St. Lawrence received a note, as she supposed, from Mr. Howard, requesting her to call upon him, being an invalid, at his lodgings at Millbank. She informed Lady Seymour of his arrival, and her wish to see him, who desired she would take her carriage for that purpose. I was not at home, or I certainly should not have suffered her to go unattended. On my return, about ten minutes after her departure, I found the note lying on the table in Lady Seymour's dressing-room. It appeared to be written in a *feigned* hand, and was sealed with an impression familiar to me. I demanded of my servant *who* had opened the carriage door, to *what part* of the town it was ordered, he said to No. —, Milbank, Westminster; I then insisted, upon pain of my displeasure, that he would
inform

inform me, *who* had brought the note for Mrs. St. Laurence; he replied, "a chairman of Lord Woodley's!" my fears were confirmed, after having armed myself, I hastened to Milbank; on my arrival, the door was opened by a female servant; I rushed by her, and proceeded to the first floor. On my entering the room, I beheld Mrs. St. Laurence sitting pensively upon a sofa. She started, and cried, "Heavens! Sir Charles, what has brought you here!" "Permit me Madam," said I, "to enquire of the servant, *who* is the master of these apartments. If I am not mistaken, you are grossly deceived, entrapped, and on the point of destruction!" she grew pale and exclaimed, "*Why* do you think so?" Mr. Howard is a man of honour; and the servant said, that the Gentleman who hired

hired the lodgings yesterday, would be here in a few minutes!" "very possibly," resumed I; "And, with your permission, I will wait to receive him." I had scarcely uttered these words, when Lord Woodley entered the room! he was overpowered with confusion! at length recovering his effrontery, "You are *lucky*, Madam" said he, in having such a *champion*, but he who wins you, shall possess you." Then, drawing his sword, instantly made a pass at my breast. I parried the thrust, and disarmed my assailant, not without wounding him. I fear *mortally*. He fell,—a surgeon was sent for, he was conveyed to his bed; my sword had deeply penetrated his side, and he now lies without hope of recovery.

He has deserved his fate. But Mrs. St. Laurence will, (I lament the circumstance)

cumstance) be *still* a victim. I immediately brought Lady Seymour to her; from the Opera, she attended her home, but she had scarcely any signs of life; of *sense* she discovered none.

The most zealous attention shall be paid to her situation; she interests every person in my family; she is indeed deserving of adoration!

A slight wound which gives me infinite pain, prevents my writing more fully; you shall hear again, if any change takes place, from

Madam,

Your most obedient,

Humble servant,

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

LET-
I am sorry to hear of your illness. (I lament the circumstance)

LETTER LXXVII.

Lora WOODLEY to Sir CHARLES

SEYMOUR.

Milbank, Dec. 179—

SEYMOUR, the hour is arrived, in which I cannot fly from the pangs of self-reproach! The bed of death, is the tribunal of conscience! Here truth will be heard; and justice defeat the equivocations of sophistry!

While life yet remains in this polluted bosom, suffer me to commit my memory to your care; and to
make

make some reparation for my conduct by avowing the enormity of my errors. Having heard that Mr. Howard was the relation of Julia St. Laurence, and that she hourly expected his arrival, I formed the expedient to trepan her. The notorious character of the house, into which I had drawn her, authorized me to hope, that the mistress of it would assist in the horrid plan, to detain her till midnight, and then to force her into my carriage, waiting for the purpose. I had provided a packet-boat at Margate, and meant to have instantly conveyed her to Holland. This was not all! Having been, some time since requested by Mr. Howard, to make every enquiry after an American merchant, resident in England, through the means of my banker in the city, a fortnight ago I discovered

his

his abode. From every circumstance of his conversation, I was soon convinced he was the father of Mrs. St. Laurence, and dreading his being a bar to my machinations, I told him that his daughter was *dead*! that she had expired in a remote part of Devonshire, a short time after her arrival in England! The poor old man tore his white hairs; bewailed the fate of his darling; and wished for death as a relief from sorrow. After thanking me, for putting an end to his fruitless researches, he took his leave! Seymour, I had a *heart*, sufficiently hardened in iniquity, to behold an aged parent, frantic, despairing, bending to the grave with affliction, while I had the *power* to render him completely happy! A few days after this interview he embarked for America. My intention with respect to Mrs. St.

Lau-

Laurence, was, as soon as I arrived in Holland, and had accomplished my triumph, to convey her as a maniac on board a ship, bound to Philadelphia; to pay for her passage, and transport her to her father. There is yet another *dreadful secret*, attending the fate of this unhappy and amiable woman, which time alone must develop!

Such are my crimes! Heaven made you the instrument of its just vengeance! I conjure you to snatch my name from infamy, by silencing the malice of my intimate associates! Bear my last repentant sigh, to the injured *Julia*, whose insulted virtues have called for the interposition of Divine justice!

I Remember

Remember me to Lord Allford; there is, in the chaos of human misery, a shaft, which even rectitude like *his*, cannot avert! I grow faint, and can scarcely see the paper. Continue to protect the *spotless* Julia!—to shield her gentle bosom from the thorns of calumny; and—the subtle poison of depraved example.—Seymour—farewell *for ever*!—accept the *last* benediction—of your expiring—friend—

For your exculpation, I think it just to declare, that you only acted in your *own defence*; and, that the *first* assault was made by me.

WOODLEY.

As a man of honour, I conjure you to keep the contents of this letter concealed from all, *except* Mrs. St. Laurence.

LET-

LETTER LXXVIII.

Lord ALLFORD to Sir CHARLES

SEYMOUR.

Portland Place, Jan. 1799.—

Sunday Evening, nine o'clock.

I Have this instant, on my arrival in town, heard, that Woodley is *no more!* Your safety requires *instant* flight; you can conceal yourself at my house till your carriage is ready. Hasten I entreat you; your life is in danger if you delay a moment.

I have sent an express to Dover, for the purpose of hiring a vessel, and

will accompany you thither; be expeditious if you are not lost to reason !

Yours, even, I

ALLFORD.

SIR CHARLES SEYMOUR to Lord

ALLFORD.

Portrait-Square

London: Night, eleven o'clock.

I have ordered my carriage to your door in half an hour. I will once more, behold Julia St. Lawrence!

Lady Seymour has not heard of Woodley's death; she is at Mrs. Vernon's assembly; I shall therefore avoid the pain of taking leave.

Barnard tells me that Julia will not tell me! She is totally intemperate! She

LETTER LXXIX.

Sir CHARLES SEYMOUR to Lord
ALLFORD.

*Portman-Square,
Sunday Night, eleven o'clock.*

I Have ordered my carriage to your door in half an hour, I will *once more*, behold Julia St. Laurence !

Lady Seymour has not heard of Woodley's death ; she is at Mrs. Vernon's assembly ; I shall therefore avoid the pain of taking leave.

Barnard tells me that Julia will not know me ! She is totally insensible !

She has not spoke, (till within these ten minutes,) since last night!—I hear her physician—I fly to her chamber.—

* * * * *

I have seen her! She is not dead! but she is deprived of sense! She smiled upon me; but it was a vacant smile; the faint reflection of intellect—for, the sun of reason was set in delirium.

I write in an adjoining apartment. I think I hear her voice! yes, she is singing mournfully! Oh God! must I leave her in this situation—unprotected—deprived of reason!—So fair—so *innocent* a woman! Allford, were it not better she should die? I have preserved her from dishonour, and only lament that I did not perish in her defence.

I will,

I will, once more look at her,—
only for a moment—for the *last time*—
—and then—*curst* be my stars! I
will obey your summons. * *

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

I write in an adjoining apartment.
I think I hear her voice! yes, she is
lingering mournfully! Oh God! must I
leave her in this situation—unprotec-
ed—deprived of reason!—So fair—
to marry a woman! Alford, were
it not better she should die? I have
prevented her from dishonour, and
only lament that I did not perish in

I 4

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I will

LETTER LXXX.

Sir CHARLES SEYMOUR to Lady SEYMOUR.

Dover, Jan. 179—

MY dearest Frances; Lord Allford, who is the bearer of this letter, will explain the absolute necessity for my abrupt departure. I shall remain at Ostend till my fate is decided; from the circumstance of Woodley's having made the *first* assault, I trust the laws will acquit me.

You will do an act of humanity, in protecting Mrs. St. Laurence. I

conjure

conjure you, desert her not, in her calamity, but with every aid of gentleness and skill, endeavour to restore her.

Let no person see her during her *delirium*; (except Lord Allford,) there is a degree of unpardonable barbarity, in exposing the wrecks of nature to the pitiless eye of vulgar curiosity; I have often shuddered with horror, at the avidity with which some hardened beings seek out the unfortunate, merely to triumph over their miseries! Shun the scene of woe, which you cannot alleviate! Yet remember, there are few afflictions so desperate, as to defy consolation, and be assured the lenient aids of meek persuasion, and tender sympathy, often restore to comfort, the wretch whom every hope had abandoned.

Lord

Lord Allford, has promised to be the guardian of Julia, till the arrival of Mr. Howard.

Avoid that monster of iniquity, Mrs. Vernon! Frances, happy had you been, had you *never* seen her! Woodley, has paid with his life, the forfeit, which Heaven demanded! and I shall not stoop to the base revenge of stigmatizing the *memory* of a man, already sullied with the blackest enormities!

The dreadful gulph, into which you have plunged yourself, will overwhelm you; call reason to your aid, obey her dictates, and endeavour to repair our shattered finances.

You shall hear from me again, the instant I land at Ostend; farewell my dearest

dearest Frances; be careful of Julia's safety; do not let her *perish*; be the kind, the affectionate friend her misfortunes stand in need of. Devote those hours, you would otherwise consume in destructive dissipation, to the offices of benevolence; and, believe me, you will find more satisfaction in the occupation of doing good, than in feeding the avarice of your base associates with the remnant of an husband's fortune. Be the wife of my heart once more, and merit the returning affection of

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

LET-

to sacrifice that wife to his profligate
 associate. The persecutions of Lord
 Woodley, during his visit at Hare-
 field, were doubtless the result of a
 concerted plan between you and him.
 But I have still to maintain an un-
 sullied reputation.

*Lady SEYMOUR to Sir CHARLES SEY-
 MOUR.*

Portman-Square, Jan. 179—

YOUR secret flight, and your un-
 kind letter, are equal proofs of your
 tenderness. But, Sir Charles, you
 deceive yourself if you suppose I am a
 stranger to your duplicity. Mrs.
 Vernon has opened my eyes; she has
 discovered your native deformity, and
 convinced me, that the husband who
 would basely endeavour to seduce the
 friend of his wife, would not hesitate

to sacrifice *that wife* to his profligate associate. The persecutions of Lord Woodley, during his visit at Harefield, were doubtless the result of a concerted plan between you and him. But the horrid snare failed to entrap me, and I live, still to maintain an un-sullied reputation.

Mrs. Vernon does not lament the libertine she has lost in Lord Woodley. She rejoices to behold the spell which is broken; and joins with me, in execrating *your* conduct; and in bidding you adieu, *for ever!*

I have desired Lord Allford to remove Mrs. St. Laurence from my house; as soon as her health will permit; *there* you have also been more busy than the propriety of wedded life

life allows; the zeal with which you espoused that lady's cause, will not add to *your* heroism, or *her* reputation. Your frequent visits, to her cottage, were dictated by *more* than friendship; and marked, with *less* than prudence; when a husband, leaves his wife, alone, and exposed to the attacks of an insidious spoiler; if he escapes dishonour; he has more to thank *her* chastity than his *own* precaution. *Such* a wife, cannot but despise, *such* a husband.

As soon as preliminaries are arranged, I shall retire to the house of my friend, (Mrs. Vernon. My marriage settlement will support me; and; conscious of the rectitude of my own heart, I shall endeavour
to

to defeat the malice of my ene-
mies.

FRANCES SEYMOUR.

friendship, and marked, with life
than prudence; when a husband
leaves his wife alone, and exposed
to the attacks of an insidious spoiler;
if he escapes dishonour; he has
more to thank, for chastity than
his own preservation. Save a wife,
cannot but despise, save a hus-
band.

As soon as preliminaries are
arranged, I shall retire to the house
of my friend, Mrs. Vernon. My
marriage settlement will support me;
and, conscious of the rectitude of
my heart, I shall endeavour

LETTER LXXXII.

Sir CHARLES SEYMOUR to Lady SEY-
MOUR.

Ostend, Jan. 179—

QUIT not my house, I conjure you! Frances, you are deceived; you are *lost*, if you accept an asylum under the roof of Mrs. Vernon. The moment I hear you have committed such an act of phrensy, I swear, most solemnly, I will instantly return to England, and brave my fate.

Have

Have a care Frances; dread the
resentment of an injured husband,
whose diminution of regard, was the
effect of the profligate advances of the
most artful of women! Will you
make *her* your friend?

Remain where you are, all will
yet be well—and you shall triumph in
the devoted heart, of

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

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LET-

LETTER LXXXIII.

Lord ALLFORD to Mrs. ST. LAURENCE.

LORD Allford requests the honour of being permitted to wait on Mrs. St. Laurence. He has a letter to deliver to her, written by Lord Woodley to Sir Charles Seymour, a short time before he expired. As the contents *nearly interest* Mrs. St. Laurence, and as they cannot be revealed to any *third* person, Lord Allford will do himself

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the pleasure of executing his commission, with Mrs. St. Laurences's leave, this evening.

Portland Place, Jan. 179—

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LETTER LXXXIV.

Lady SEYMOUR to Lord ALLFORD.

LADY Seymour begs Lord Allford will send the letter, he has for Mrs. St. Laurence, as it is quite impossible for her to receive any company in her present languid state. She has requested Lady Seymour to be her amanuensis on this occasion, not being able to *read*, or *write*, herself. If there remains any objection, to entrusting Lady Seymour with the commission, she does not doubt that in a few

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few days Mrs. St. Laurence will be sufficiently recovered to receive Lord Allford.

Portman-Square, Jan. 179—

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LETTER LXXXV.

Lord ALLFORD to Sir CHARLES SEY-
MOUR.

Portland-Place, Feb. 179—

BEAR with me ! for I am frantic !
I am cursed beyond the power of fate
to save me ! Julia St. Laurence is MY
WIFE ! my LOST JULIA ! and I am a
villain !

Tear open my wounded heart,
spare me not ; spurn me from thy
bosom. Julia is *still* living ! and I,
am married to ANOTHER !

Is

Is there on earth such a wretch as I am? This, this, is the reward of avarice! But I will not bear it, I will not drag a golden chain! scourged by the justice of Heaven; and pointed at by the finger of contempt!

I have seen her! Whom? My wife! My first, my *only* wife! I have clasped her faded form to my rent heart! I have bathed her pale cheek with tears of anguish! and recalled her wandering senses, with the voice of a frantic husband!

Husband! Hold, hold my burning brain! Am I not the husband of Lady Allford?—YES! JULIA is Lady Allford; I will acknowledge no *other*.

Seymour! she is *resigned!* Dear patient angel! she has not *once* reproached

proached me ! She has even conjured me to save my name from obloquy—and *leave her, for ever !*

All the powers of earth and hell should not compel me to such an outrage ! She talks of dying ! I will perish *with her !*—The same sod shall cover our ashes ! PITY, shall watch over our remains, and REFLECTION, blot the tablet of our sorrows, with a TEAR !

I will return, (to her, who *usurps* the title of) Lady Allford, *all* her fortune. I could live with JULIA in a hovel ; and think myself an emperor ! Two years of misery, has she endured ! an exiled wanderer ; in poverty, in sorrow ! hopeleſs ! and unfriended ! while I,—was rioting in luxury ! in the abhorred careſſes of
her

her rival !—Is there any punishment sufficient for my crimes ?

She is declining fast; she is fading to the grave ! grief has fed upon the crimson of her lip ;—that lip, from which no sound ever proceeded, but celestial harmony. Those eyes have lost their lustre—with weeping for such a wretch as I am ! Seymour, I CANNOT, I WILL NOT survive her.

Her Physicians have declared, that nothing but the air of Italy *can save her* ! OH GOD ! I would perish, in the wilds of Lapland, to preserve her ! To recall those beauties, withered by affliction ! was she only reserved, to prove this last, *worst* pang ? to behold her *lost* husband, to receive his fond embrace, and close
her

her eyes on the bosom that *deserted* her?

Seymour, thou art a witness, how *much* I loved her! how tenderly I *lamented* her! how sincerely I *repented* my second marriage!

My friend, how shall I return, your generosity? How shall I repay you, for the preservation of my darling? Lady Seymour was present at the interview; that has almost deprived me of reason! I was not prepared for such a trial!

Julia was impatient, for the letter I had to deliver—she appointed this morning to receive me, and quitted her bed for that purpose. The curtains of her windows were drawn; and,

and, as I entered the gloomy chamber, I perceived a delicate form, reclined upon the sofa, sleeping.—Lady Seymour was sitting near her; her face was partly concealed by her hand, whiter than ivory! the doubtful light prevented my instantly knowing her. Lady Seymour gently whispered, “My dear friend, here is Lord Allford;” she awoke—raised herself upon her arm—“*Do I live!*” said I—she gave a piercing shriek, and rushed into my arms!—but alas! the conflict was too severe for her weak frame; she clasped me to her bosom, and instantly sunk senseless before me.

You must imagine the scene! language cannot describe it! Time never will obliterate it from my memory!

Lady

Lady Seymour has promised me to conceal my Julia, till something can be arranged for our happiness. Tell me how I shall act, *if* she survives? Or where I shall hide myself, if I *again* lose her? NEVER! I will perish *with* her! for in *this world*, we will PART NO MORE!

The preservation of a life, so precious, demands the most speedy determination. Every hour seems fraught with danger! She is, indeed, very, *very* ill. Though, in pity to my anxiety, she endeavours to *conceal*, what I know she suffers.

Write the instant you receive this letter. I have communicated the whole of our unhappy story to Mr. Howard,

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Howard, who is still at Bath. Im-
patient for your advice, I remain,
faithfully your's,

ALLFORD.

LET

LETTER LXXXVI.

Sir CHARLES SEYMOUR to Lord ALL-
FORD.

Ostend, Feb. 179—

I AM overpowered with astonishment and joy. Be prudent, make no *eclat* ; I will satisfy the mind of Lady Allford, she shall relinquish you wholly. You can retire to Italy with your Julia, till the separation is finally concluded. Make me the negociator, I will undertake to be a successful one : I shall write to her upon the subject immediately, you have nothing to fear from her ! again, I entreat you to observe

observe much caution, lest the unfortunate affair should transpire ; Lady Seymour will console your lovely wife, and you *shall* yet be happy.

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

LET-

LETTER LXXXVII.

Sir CHARLES SEYMOUR to Lady

ALLFORD.

Oxford, Feb. 179—

MADAM,

THE purpose of my writing this letter, is to give you an unequivocal specimen of my good wishes. I know your abhorrence of Lord Allford; you have given me too many flattering *proofs* of your partiality, to admit of a doubt that you would be happy to separate yourself entirely from him. An occasion now presents itself;—he is attached to *another*; to,

one

one, who has a *prior* right to his affections. He returns no more to your mansion ! your fortune he restores to you, but he demands an immediate and *final* separation. The avowed instances of your infidelity, will, I trust, teach you to be silent. Remember, you are in the power of Mrs. Vernon, and she will readily become your accuser ; therefore I seriously advise you to save your shattered reputation from the *fiat* of disgrace, and rest satisfied, that you still preserve the *title* of Lady Allford, to sanction your indiscretions ! I lament the necessity of this proposal ; but you will forgive me, when I own, I have in my possession, all the letters you wrote to Mrs. VERNON, in which you basely formed a plan to undermine the *honour* of my WIFE ! that false woman (I am ashamed

I.

to

to acknowledge it,) was the object of a momentary caprice; and her hopes of separating me from (and stamping disgrace on the character of) Lady Seymour, prompted her to discover your diabolical correspondence.

Now Madam, I propose, what I think in justice to your husband, and respect to your own character, you will readily agree to; which is, that you will, without delay, receive Lord Allford's Solicitor; and immediately, restore to him that liberty, which the laws will otherwise authorize him to DEMAND. Prevarication, or attempt to expostulate, will prove useless. Lord Allford, the injured husband, whose TITLE you so shamefully boasted to have *purchased*, now demands that peace
of

of mind, which he has never enjoyed since he participated it with you.

I am,

Your Ladyship's

Obedient servant,

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

JULIA ST. LAURENCE to Mrs. MORE-
TON.

Portman-square, Feb. 179—

OH! my friend! my protectress!
I have found my SIDNEY! my lost
husband! my adored Lord Allford!
he still lives; and lives for his Julia!

He had heard of the shipwreck, in
which it was reported, and believed,
that I had perished in my voyage from
America. My dread of making any
public

public enquiry after him, lest the place of my abode should be discovered to my relations, kept him in ignorance of my fate: and pecuniary embarrassments, induced him, after a few months had elapsed in sorrow, to listen to his uncles proposal of a *second* marriage. Do not condemn him. He gave his hand to another; but his heart, his generous heart still mourned for me! yes! I have innumerable proofs of his tender regret! of his perfect adoration!

It was not unkindness; it was not neglect of my memory; the marriage day was clouded with sorrow, and his nuptial pillow was bathed with tears! *she* was rich; my Allford was distressed! he did not clasp a new idol, to his aching bosom; or, in the em-

braces of beauty, forget the fate] of her, who *was*, who *is*, the darling of his soul!—he has suffered sufficiently for the sacrifice; it shall be the study of my life to make him forgive *himself*; for *I* receive him like a returning Prodigal; and he shall, in the poor hut of mutual affection, forget the miseries of a wealthy bondage!

Had Lady Allford *loved* him; had she been *amiable*; had she possessed an heart, capable of estimating his *value*, or adorning his *virtues*! oh! my friend, I would have hid myself in a mountain cavern; the poor dependant on savages; or I would have toiled in obscurity for a scanty pittance rather than have robbed *her*, of such a treasure; or have subjected *him* to the contempt of the world.

world.—But she abhorred him! gracious heaven! is it possible to abhor Lord Allford?

Oh! how much do I owe to the honourable protection of Sir Charles Seymour! whose generous interference rescued me from the violence of a ruffian! yet, hold! the remains of Lord Woodley are mouldering in the tomb; and peace be to his ashes!

Mr. Howard, (who has promised to write to my respected father, and to obtain his forgiveness,) heard my story with patience, and wept for my misfortunes: my declining state of health requires the air of Italy; otherwise I would instantly embark with my dear Lord Allford, for America; my father, deceived by Lord Woodley,

Woodley, is now on his passage home; I need not tell you, how much I long to embrace him.

We leave England to-morrow: I retain the name of *Mrs. St. Laurence*, I cannot expose my husband to injurious animadversions; no! I will rather suffer all the calumnies that vulgar minds can heap upon me. I will convince the world, that the virtues of the heart, are not to be tarnished by the outward forms of life. I will *be*, even under the title of a mistress, what the proudest wedded dame, would in vain, attempt to imitate.

I shall not long exist in this chequered scene of misfortune; when I die, you will, I know you will, do justice to my memory.

You

You shall hear from me often, and
shall have my unceasing wishes, for
your health and happiness.

My dearest friend,

Faithfully and

Affectionately yours

JULIA.

I shall not long exist in this che-
quered scene of misfortune; when I
die, you will, I know you will do
justice to my memory.

You

LETTER LXXXIX.

Lady ALLFORD to Lord ALLFORD:

Portland-Place, Feb. 179—

THE *abhorrence* in which I ever held you, will prevent my feeling the least regret at our *final* separation. But, my Lord, you shall not triumph, for I, (in my turn) will have *justice*!

I am no stranger to the motive of your conduct; or the shameless effrontery with which you defy the world; by an avowed and public attachment to Mrs. St. Laurence; the domestics of Sir Charles Seymour are bought
over

over to my interest; and the result of their communications, will establish sufficient ground for an immediate *divorce*.

Thus I consign you to your original insignificance! and wish you all the happiness with your *innocent* companion, that *titled beggary* can bestow, with these charitable sentiments for the *last time*, I subscribe myself

CLARA ALLFORD.

I am no stranger to the motive of your conduct; or the shameful story which you tell the world by an avowed and public attachment to Sir Charles Seymour, the domestic of Sir Charles Seymour are bought over

LETTER XC.

Lord ALLFORD, to Sir CHARLES

SEYMOUR.

Lyons, April 179—

WITH some difficulty we passed through this hostile country, and are now safely arrived within a few posts of the Alps; those stupendous mountains covered with snow, and replete with wonders! my adorable Julia, is already much recovered, and, I have hopes, that the temperate air of Naples, will perfectly restore her.

It is impossible to describe the beauty of the scenes through which we have travelled; but a warlike spirit seems to prevail, and to inspire every bosom, with the maddest enthusiasm. I lament, my dear Seymour, that anarchy treads so closely upon the heels of emancipation; and when I see the devastation spreading around me, I bless my native land, and think the poorest peasant an object to be envied. Nothing shall persuade me, that *virtue* is not the natural inmate of the human breast; and I believe, that the vast difference of rank, and the vices of those, favoured with the gifts of fortune, are entirely productive of all the ills that threaten humanity.

The insolence of what is called the higher order of society, creates that sort of murmuring which awakens the
 slum-

slumbering mind; in those who are most enlightened, it produces a restlessness, which soon grows into contempt! contempt banishes respect, and produces *hatred*; the next idea is REVENGE! reason then begins to ruminate on what are the real claims of superiority, and the powers of intellect assert their right to pre-eminence; we shudder at the horrors of a civil war! we shrink when we behold a torrent of human blood, appeasing the thirst of an incensed multitude. But the ignorance in which the obscure order of the people are nursed; and the perpetual subjection in which they are educated, prevent the expansion of the mind, and make them only sensible of wrongs, and eager for redress. Take the tyger from his den, will he not seek for blood? Will not the solitude in which he has grown

into

into strength, render him savage? and the sight of an assailant, urge him on to slaughter; it is not thus with the domestic animal; he, tamed by mercy, nourished with gentleness, and prompted by instinct to gratitude, licks the hand that fed him, and familiarized by kindness, in his turn, protects his humane preserver.

The brute creation are subdued to our service, because they are unconscious of their strength. But MAN is a SUPERIOR CREATURE; he is guided by more than *instinct*; and oppression is the certain means of awakening reflection. How far it is safe to rouse the *thinking* multitude, time will discover. But while the enlightened *mind* knows, and values its own claims, as well may the waves attempt to remove the rock from its founda-

foundation, as proud oppression to triumph over reason.

Seymour you are happy in Britain. Its glorious Constitution (as long as its *native purity* is preserved) will make it the envy of the world! you are a Legislator, be it your task to prop the fabric, and you will enjoy repose under its sublime protection. Let the philosopher travel before he forms his opinions; and he will, I think, unite with the *laurels* of conquest the *roses* of PHILANTHROPY.

Adieu, believe me, your's,

ALLFORD.

LET-

LETTER XCL

JULIA ST. LAURENCE to Mrs. MORE-
TON.

Naples, June, 179—

MY dearest friend, you will rejoice to hear that my health is nearly re-established; and you will congratulate me, on being restored to one of the greatest of human blessings, the affections of a *father*! Yes, he is perfectly reconciled to me, and to my union with Lord Allford; he has written to me, his letter is the bond of parental tenderness, and I shall yet

M

live

live, to embrace him ! He visits England in the autumn ; we shall certainly return to meet him ; and, with his permission, will accompany him to America ; my Lord Allford's unremitting attention has given me to my family ! May that POWER, which watches over, and protects those who persevere with virtue through the desarts of misfortune ; gild our remaining days with the beams of consolation.

I shall see you in London in the course of the summer, I shall thank you for your past kindness ; and, I trust, ever prove myself,

Your affectionate friend,

JULIA.

LET-

LETTER XCH.

Sir CHARLES SEYMOUR, to Lord ALL-
FORD.

London, Aug. 179—

THIS letter, my dear Allford, will find you in the luxurious regions of Italy, where the beauties of nature will only be surpassed, by the charms of LADY ALLFORD ! I now venture to address her by *that title*, for she, who lately usurped the right, of the amiable Julia, has, by the sanction of the laws, *resigned it*.

M 2

You

You may return to England, with perfect safety; satisfy the mind of Lady Allford by a second and public marriage; and, enjoy the happiness you so justly merit.

I would offer you the participation of my fortune; but, that you command one *superior*! The worthy Mr. Howard, who was well acquainted with the depraved conduct of Lord Woodley; and fully sensible of the virtues of your amiable wife, *is dead*! The news reached me yesterday; and the *last* action of his life, was the epitome of every other. He has left *the whole of his property* to JULIA, LADY ALLFORD!—His fortune was very considerable; and Heaven bestowed it on him, for the purpose of rewarding virtue!

Mrs.

Mrs. Vernon, whose depraved mind, was perpetually employed in forming schemes for the destruction of others; since your departure from England, has fallen a victim to the snares of a congenial spirit; she married a foreign adventurer, of the vilest character, who dissipated her fortune; reduced her to misery; and, finally broke her heart.

Hasten to your native country, where you may depend on finding, in *enlightened Beings*, a proper respect for mental perfections; whether their possessor is decorated with the tinsel of a coronet; or is the lowly unadorned inhabitant of the poorest cottage!

Where a PEOPLE, prosperous and liberal not only feel their present happiness, but look forward to its continuance under a PRINCE, graced with all the attributes of nature ! whose exalted birth, receives the proud confirmation of superior splendor, by the virtues of his heart ! and whose mind (improved by education and experience,) deserves that adoration, which it is beyond the reach of earthly power to exact ! Allford you are sensible that I am no courtier ; but where THE MAN at an *early* period of life soars above the highest claims of rank ; where *illustrious sentiments* shed glory on hereditary rights ; I am the *first* to acknowledge their *supremacy* !

I am impatient to welcome your arrival ; and join with my dearest
Frances

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Frances in hoping the event may not
be far distant.

Farewell my dear Lord,

Believe me ever,

Faithfully your's,

CHARLES SEYMOUR.

LETTER XCIII.

Mrs. MORETON to Lady ALLFORD.

London, Aug. 179—

THE power of language must prove feeble, where it endeavours to describe the sensations of supreme delight. My dearest Julia, you have known my heart long enough to do justice to its feelings; your past sorrows, and your inestimable virtues, have frequently called them forth, to lament, and to admire!

The many vicissitudes it has been your lot to encounter, will, by the
example

example of the fortitude with which you endured them, teach the human mind, to meet the changes of this chequered scene, with meek submission ;—and, steady in the exercise of rectitude, await that compensation, which must ultimately evince the justice of Heaven !

Lord Allford has been sufficiently punished for his fault ; and I trust, in your society, will pass many years of happiness ; but when I reflect on the fate of the wretched Woodley, my soul shudders with horror ! snatched from this disastrous scene, “ with all his imperfections on his head,” to answer for the most atrocious crimes, before the tribunal of his Maker ! such is the awful example, may it prove a *useful one*.

Mrs.

Mrs. Vernon's death, was as dreadful, as her conduct was depraved ; the contempt which followed her to the grave, can only be equalled by that, which attends her profligate associate, (the *late* Lady Allford) whose life of ignorance and dissipation must terminate in ruin and repentance ; how many amiable, unfortunate women, are pining in poverty, and stigmatized by calumny, while such unworthy monsters revel in splendour—but the caprices of fortune are inexplicable !

Sir Charles and Lady Seymour are perfectly happy. *She* is restored to reason, and has thereby recalled her *husband's* affections. They are now the envy of the vicious ; the admiration of the good !

The

The progress of your misfortunes, and their blissful termination, would form an excellent moral tale; and would prove, that, however brilliant the career of base and little souls, the liberal and enlightened, in their turn *must triumph!* and, as the SUN darts forth with renovated splendour, through the glooms of a tempestuous sky, the MIND acquires additional lustre, from having encountered the storms of life, with PHILANTHROPY, HONOUR, and PHILOSOPHY.

Adieu, my dearest Julia,

Believe me faithfully,

Your friend,

ANNA MORTON.

F I N I S.